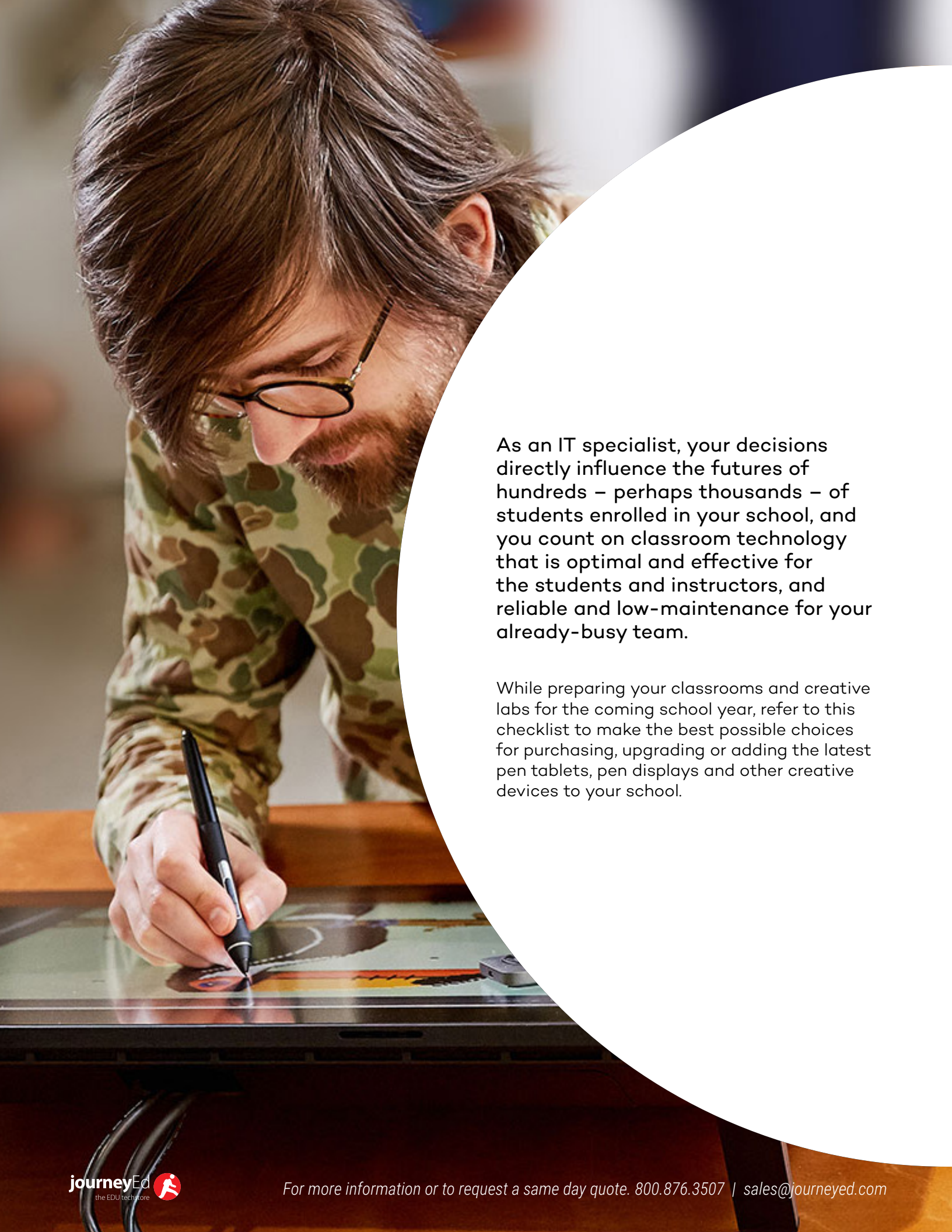


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5 Things to Consider When Updating Your School's Creative Labs





As an IT specialist, your decisions directly influence the futures of hundreds – perhaps thousands – of students enrolled in your school, and you count on classroom technology that is optimal and effective for the students and instructors, and reliable and low-maintenance for your already-busy team.

While preparing your classrooms and creative labs for the coming school year, refer to this checklist to make the best possible choices for purchasing, upgrading or adding the latest pen tablets, pen displays and other creative devices to your school.

1. Reputation for quality

What's the reputation of the company manufacturing the devices?

Look for a vendor that not only makes top-quality products, but also intimately understands the creative process. Wacom has been the world's leading manufacturer of pen tablets, interactive pen displays and digital interface solutions for more than 30 years. Wacom's Intuos Pro pen tablets and Cintiq interactive pen displays are designed for creativity and have features and functions specially designed to make digital art creation natural, fluid and ergonomically correct.

"In motion design, we have to come up with many ideas very quickly. If you're using a mouse, those images are not going to be very good. The intuitive movement of hand-drawing on the Cintiq surface helps students to speed up the process and create many quality images very quickly."

— Ed Cheetham, Motion Design Professor,
Ringling College of Art and Design

In the classroom

Art and design teachers and students use a variety of Wacom products, including:

- Wacom Cintiq Pro pen displays
- Wacom MobileStudio Pro pen computers
- Wacom Intuos Pro pen tablets
- Intuos pen tablets

2. Physical fitness and flexibility

Will the devices comply with space limitations, workstation set-ups and lending practices? Is the equipment ergonomic, adaptable and usable?

Your classrooms might have limited desktop or podium space, or your faculty may want the ability to relocate devices, lend them out to students or use the devices in a collaborative setting. Budget-conscious schools may choose to equip the teacher's desk with a larger format, desktop Cintiq and outfit the student workstations with smaller Cintiqs or Intuos Pro pen tablets. Be sure physical attributes such as size, portability and sturdiness support how students and instructors will be using the equipment.

The tablets and displays should allow for ergonomic correctness in multiple positions which affect comfort and usability. Many users find that the pen is a superior ergonomic choice over a mouse, especially those who are concerned with carpal tunnel and repetitive stress caused by prolonged use of any one computer input device.

Ideally, every creative tool should be easy to adapt and customize, including the ability to be mounted on an adjustable arm, or on a rolling cart that can be moved to various locations.

Mix it up

You might find that a mix of different products – pen tablets, and pen displays as well as analog solutions like pencil, paper and animation tables – works well to satisfy everyone's needs.



“At FIT, we had what’s called a hybrid classroom, which is simply a room with about 27 Cintiqs with large drafting tables. These types of rooms are essential for art and design education because they accommodate all of the ways people work. Some students are completely digital, and some completely traditional. Others, like me, like having the option of both.”

— Brittany Falussy, Graduate,
Fashion Institute of Technology



3. Reliability, ease of use & maintenance


Do the devices require specialized training and software? Will they need complicated and time-consuming maintenance? How sturdy are they?

Technology for creative classrooms must withstand intense usage while also supporting the unique aspects of teaching and learning.

Look for intuitive design, plug-and-play functionality, standardized connectivity and easy set up if you don't want to manage an intensive training program or maintenance schedule. The tablets and displays you select should also work with common software programs and easily integrate software upgrades.

Wacom Cintiq Pro pen displays and Intuos Pro pen tablets are regarded as the gold-standard input devices in countless schools and studios worldwide. Wacom backs up every product with a two-year warranty and a best-in-class customer support team that can guide you every step of the way during set up, troubleshooting and maintenance.

To be confident in your choice, rely on the same industry-leading manufacturer that leading art and design schools use. Wacom products are widely-used in schools with creative arts programs including: illustration, animation, game development, photography, visual communications, graphic and web design, video editing, motion graphics, special FX, and industrial, fashion, interior and architectural design.



“We loaded our computer labs with Wacom Cintiqs. They’re just like pen to paper. Now the students can look at the pen on the screen and they don’t have the disconnect that they’d have with a mouse.”

— Owen Foster, Department Chair of Industrial Design,
Savannah College of Art and Design

4. Represents professional standards

Are these the same devices that professionals are using? Are leading schools using these tablets and displays in their classrooms?

The tablets and displays selected for your school should not only meet all of your requirements, but should also prepare students for real-world professions. That's why many leading schools choose Wacom products in place of "smart boards" or other all-purpose classroom technology that lacks functionality that students will encounter on the job.

Check with the instructors at your school to see which devices are the ones used most by industry pros, or survey the students, who are often the first to know about new technology trends. Ask software vendors to see which brands they recommend for optimal compatibility. You can also research case studies and references on association sites and industry user group pages.





Many schools with creative arts programs, including the Ringling College of Art and Design, the Fashion Institute of Technology, Sheridan College and the Savannah College of Art and Design, rely on Wacom interface solutions to maintain their cutting-edge reputations and give students the best training and best chances for career success.

“When I visited studios, I saw that the digital artists in those studios were using Wacom technology. I felt that our students ought to start on that technology from the first year, so by the time graduation came along, they were smooth, and it was part of their workflow, and they could walk into a studio and be effective from day one.”

— Rafael Goldchain,
Applied Photography Coordinator, Sheridan College

5. Pricing & value

What will we get for our investment?

Shrinking budgets and growing competition have become the norm in higher education programs, a reality that requires every dollar invested in classroom technology to return maximum value. To measure this, look beyond the price tag. Consider the long-term benefits to the instructors and students.

Evaluate tablets and displays for how they benefit a range of teaching scenarios. For example, having the ability to project images from the display onto a separate, larger screen for group viewing, allows instructors to demonstrate techniques to the whole class. Sharing files digitally also allows for helpful critique of student work, and with a digital pen, instructors can make comments and give direction and guidance directly on the work being evaluated.

Also assess how the new equipment fits in with existing assets. Wacom's ergonomically-designed, battery-free digital pen can even be used alongside a mouse and for everything a mouse is used for (plus more) in Mac, Windows and most Linux operating systems. The creative 2D and 3D software already in use at your school will work smoothly with Wacom's hardware input devices.

Wacom's engineers and the engineers at companies like Adobe, Autodesk, Corel, Toon Boom, Smith Micro, Apple and Microsoft worked together to implement drivers and pen-based pressure sensitive tools in their software programs and operating systems. The very best tools in the industries' top software programs are designed to be used with Wacom's pen devices.

“Our computer lab had the very first Graphire pen tablets in 1999, and in 2007 we switched one for a Cintiq. Each year we would exchange a few more until after about three years we had a full lab. This lab was shared between the first- and second-year students for their digital animation and design work.”

— Don Perro, 2D Commercial Animation,
Program Coordinator, Capilano University



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